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BLACK ARTS

Annual 1987/88 Edited by Donald Bogle
240 pages 140 photographs 8 1/2 x 11
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The Little Shop of Horrors. A flower with a ravenous appetite is at the core of this musical cult favorite. Apr. 13 - May 7. Rocky

for God by Joseph

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depicts a fight for body, mind and

soul — the ultimate prize fight.

Apr. 20 - May 7. **Miracles** by

Charlie Smalls and Charles

dUMAS. A young man travels

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June 11. **Karamu House**, 2350 E.

88th St., Cleveland, OH

44106-9900 (216)795-7070).

Rhode Island

Dance Mama, Dance by Barbara

Bejoian. A startling original piece

that is a poignant and powerful

interpretation of Armenian

women dealing with the pressure

of change. Directed by George

Houston Bass. Kites and Reason,

Brown University, Churchill

House, 185 Angell St., Providence,

RI 02906 (401)863-3558). May 12

- 28. 8 pm.

Washington, D.C.

As You Like It by William

Shakespeare. Directed by Michael

Kahn. Featuring Sabrina Le
Beauf (Sondra on *The Cosby
Show*). Mark Philpot, Edward
Gero, Tod van Griethuysen and
Melissa Gallagher. The
Shakespeare Theatre at the
Folger, 201 E. Capitol St. S.E.,
Washington, DC 20003
(202)546-4000). Apr. 25 - June
18; (\$18 - \$35).

Nothing Sacred by George F.

Walker. A contemporary,

humorous perspective on the

timeless issue of generational

differences. Directed by Garland

Wright. Featuring Petronia Paley,

Richard Bauer, Dennis

Christopher, Marissa Copeland,

Mark Hammer, Bob Kirsh,

Clayton LeBeauf, Bill Mondy,

Nick Olcott, Fred Stracher and

Henry Stronier. Arena Stage, 6th

and Maine, SW, Washington, D.C.

20004 (202)488-3300). Mar. 24 -

May 14 (\$15.75 - \$28.75).

England

I Have a Dream by Josh

Greenfield. A critically acclaimed

musical work based on the life of

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Directed by Woodie King, Jr.

Featuring Lee Coward, Chiquita

Jackson, Herman LeVern Jones,

Nick Serby, Bruce Strickland,

Diane Weaver and Dwight

Witherspoon. A National Black

Touring Circuit production at the

Enlighten Festival, Gardner

Center, University of Sussex,

Palmer, Brighton, England
(0-1144-0273-26884). May 22 - 27.

Books

The Big Mama Stories by Shay
Youngblood. Set in the Black
small-town South of the early
sixties, this story captures the
richness of being raised into
womanhood by a community of
women. Ithaca: Firebrand Books.
141 The Commons, Ithaca, NY

14850 (607)272-0000; 1989.
(\$8.95, paper; \$18.95, cloth).

New Rain: An Ongoing
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Eight volumes featuring poetry
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Black Masks
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April/May 1989

Spotlight on Black Art

Vol. 5 No. 5

Black Masks

\$1.75

Black
Theatre
and Arts
Listings

Cyril
Nri:
Black
British
Actor

Black
Culture
on
Parade

Herman
LeVern
Jones:

On
The
Rise

Herman LeVern Jones

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Directed by **Seret Scott**



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Bronx, NY 10471
212/549-6908

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Ariel Offset Co.

BLACK MASKS Publication,
(ISSN 0887-7580) featuring
information about Black performing
and visual arts throughout the United
States, is published monthly,
September to June. Yearly
subscription rates for 6 issues:
\$10.00, U.S.; \$12.50 Canada, \$15.
elsewhere.

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Black Masks

Apr/May 1989

Vol. 5, No.5



Herman LeVern Jones

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In traditionally-casted British drama, Cyril Nri is in the forefront of Black British actors whose talent demands a place.

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Photo by Bert Andrews



Beth Turner

New Production Schedule

In September 1989, *Black Masks* will celebrate its 5th Anniversary! Those of you who have been with us from the early days, either as subscribers or behind-the-scene volunteers, know how far we have come and what a miracle a 5th Anniversary is. We look forward to making our Anniversary issue truly commemorative.

However, as we finish this fifth year of publishing *Black Masks* on a 10 issue a year basis, it has become increasingly clear that due to our limited staff (we are still virtually a one-person organization) and space, we are not able to maintain such a vigorous production schedule. Therefore, across the next year or two, as we take the time to re-organize and explore ways to try to meet the increased day-to-day business demands of the publication, we will decrease our production schedule to once every two months. We will publish in September, November, January, March, May and July for a total of six issues. In order to cover as much information as possible, we will carry notice of events as far as two months in advance when information is available.

The reduced schedule better ensures our ability to publish in a regular and timely fashion which, much to our chagrin and certainly yours also, we have not been able to do this year. We are most appreciative of your patience. Not one subscriber has telephoned to complain.

Since we will have actually only published six issues this year also, we will extend everyone's subscription accordingly. New one-year subscription rates will be \$10. The former rate of \$15 will entitle you to a 1 1/2 year subscription of nine issues.

Thank you for your continued support. We look forward to bringing you another year of *Black Masks* with its listings of Black performing and visual art events across the country and its feature articles on personalities who, despite their importance as artists, seldom are highlighted by the mainstream press.

If you have any questions about the new schedule or subscription rates, please do not hesitate to telephone or write.

Congratulations!

Very special congratulations to The National Black Theatre on closing its Real Estate Development Project, thereby setting the stage for the demolition of its fire-gutted building at 125th and Fifth Avenue. In its place will rise a \$7 million Theatre/Retail/Office Complex - The National Black Institute of Communication Through Theatre Arts. We look forward with great anticipation to notice of its Ground Breaking Ceremony.

Arts Hot-Line

Opportunities

Independent Minority Producers Laboratory.

Independent minority producers in the Greater Washington area are asked to send a description of their projected program for consideration for broadcast on Channel 26. Send to Independent Minority Producers Laboratory, WETA, Channel 26, P.O. Box 2626, Washington, D.C. 20013 or deliver to WETA, Channel 26, Attn: Joyce Campbell, 3700 S. Four Mile Run Drive, Arlington, VA 22206. Deadline: May 12. Final selection announced in July. Productions will run from July to Dec. 1989.

The James Arthur Baldwin Awards for Playwriting. A newly created program established by the New World Theatre at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst and The Amaryllis Arts Foundation and designed to identify, encourage and support emerging minority playwrights. First prize: \$3,000, a production at Smith College and an expense paid residency at Smith; Second prize: \$1,500; Third prize: \$1,000; Fourth prize, \$1,000. For information and a copy of the guidelines, contact: The James Arthur Baldwin Awards for Playwriting, New World Theatre, 101-103 Hasbrouck Hall, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, MA 01003. Deadline for submission: June 1, 1989.

For the Record

The Blacks by Jean Genet. Black Spectrum Theatre Company, Roy Wilkins Park, 119th Ave. & Merrick Blvd., Jamaica, NY (718/723-1800). Mar. 10 - Apr. 2.

On Broadway, a production by Martin Luther King High School Students under the direction of Ms. Juanda LaJoyce Holley; Tina Atterbury, choreographer; Kristy Brooks, music director for the 41st. Regional Conference of Gamma Phi Delta Sorority, Beta Omega Chapter. Penta Hotel, 7th Ave. & West. 33rd. St., New York, NY Apr. 7 - 9.

Sun of the Sleepless by James Purdy. A pair of two character one-act plays. *Souvenirs* featured Larry Fishburne and Sheila Dabney. *Heatstroke* featured Gareth Williams and Deborah Drummond. Theater for the New City, 155 First Ave., New York, NY (212/254-1109). Mar. 23 - Apr. 9.

Tribal Influence, an exhibition of mixed media paintings on paper by Jackie Peters Cully. Ward-Nasse Gallery, 178 Prince St., New York, NY (212/925-8951). Mar. 15 - Apr. 2.

In the Wings

AUDELCO Black Arts Festival, 30 events at sites throughout New York City. June 15 - 25.

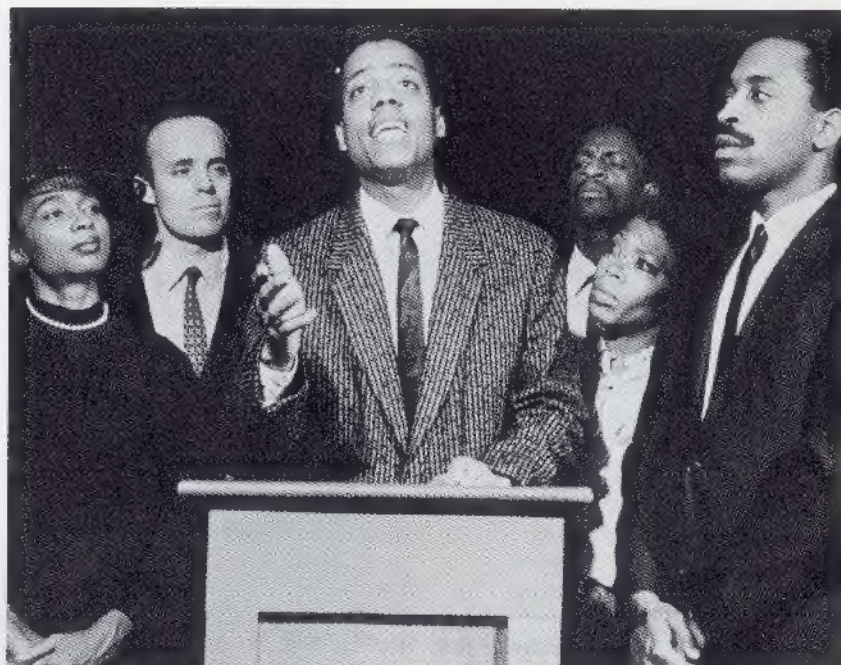
Herman LeVern Jones: On the Move

by Beth Turner

For being only thirty-four years old, Herman LeVern Jones has accumulated an especially impressive list of theatre credits. They include starting and running a successful theatre group, administering Woody King's prestigious National Black Touring Circuit for six years and most recently, co-producing the world famous National Theatre of Great Britain in New York City. He has also acted, directed, taught theatre and danced professionally. Sandwiched in between all of that, he has also managed to earn a B.A., an M.F.A. and to start on his Ph.D.

To have done so much in so little time makes it hard to imagine Jones as being anything but on the move since the moment of birth. Actually, he even came into the world in a rush, arriving three months prematurely, as if waiting the full nine months would be a waste of precious time. Or perhaps it was more a matter of getting on the merry-go-round at just the right time and in just the right place to be able to always catch the golden ring. The lucky timing of events coupled with hard work and a personality that enthusiastically responds, "Hey, why not?" to challenges, provide some of the answers for the speed, depth and breadth of Jones' accomplishments.

Theatre sought him out. In his junior year in high school, probably because of his proven stage presence as the student government president, he was invited by an English teacher to try out for *Mame*. He landed the role of the Man in the Moon, a modest start. However, that one and only foray into high school drama qualified him to be chosen as the vice-president of the 300-member drama club, a victory he attributes to his less than serious high school



I Have a Dream - (l. to r.) Chequita Jackson, James Curt Bergwall, Bruce Strickland, Dwight Witherspoon, Diane Weaver and Herman LeVern Jones.

demeanor. "I was a little bit of a clown in school. I would get my grades together and then I'd play around and have fun. So, the people in the Drama club thought it would be a hoot to have me as vice-president," Jones explains.

In 1972, he entered North Carolina State University as a pre-med student. But once again, theatre beckoned. "I was walking across campus as a Freshman, and I walked past [Thompson] Theatre and there was this big White dude standing in front. He said, 'Hey, brother, would you like to be in a play?'...I turned and I looked at him. Like who is he talking to? And so I said 'Yes. Why not?' So I went up the steps to the theatre, went inside and it was incredible."

An old gym had been converted into a black box with 300 seats. The all-White theatre company was doing a very experimental play about Vikings conquering America. Jones participated as an actor/technician, making a dramatic entrance from the scaffolding. He was amazed at the

technical creativity of the production which had objects coming out of the ceiling and coming down from the second floor to the first on slides. By the time the production had ended, Jones was hooked on theatre.

North Carolina State did not have a drama department as such but Thompson Theatre was available and the new director, Charlie Martin, was comfortable with multi-racial, non-traditional casting. Jones tried out for the next production, a melodrama *Love Rides the Rail* and was cast as a slimy whiplash kind of character. Next Jones played the title role in Ionesco's *Rhinoceros* and received an excellent review.

Meanwhile, Jones' academic focus began changing as he sought a course of studies that would better reflect his burgeoning interest in theatre. He changed his major from Biology to Psychology and finally to English, the closest he could get to a theatre major. The college did, however, offer three courses in theatre, one each in directing, acting and technical

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Beth Turner is the publisher and editor of *Black Masks*. She is also a playwright and author of the theater chapter in *Garland Press' soon-to-be published Black Arts Annual*.

Jones...

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theatre. He decided he would like to direct. For his assignment, he chose Charles Gordone's *No Place to Be Somebody*. It was a large cast and Jones petitioned and won the use of the main theatre, a first for a student director. The production received rave reviews.

Then opportunity knocked again. The Black students Jones had cast in *No Place to be Somebody* were interested in continuing their work in the theatre but felt they had no outlet on campus. Therefore, they asked Jones to consider starting a Black theatre group. Once again, Herman Jones grabbed the golden ring and all the responsibilities and hard work that went with it. At age 19 and still an undergraduate, Herman LeVern Jones could not turn down the opportunity to establish a theatre company. In turn, the students banned Jones from the naming proceedings and proclaimed themselves the LeVern Players in his honor.

The next thing Jones knew he was lobbying for campus office space, equipment and money. They received \$1,000 from the student government. Then Jones went on to solicit aid from the North Carolina Arts Council and from the general public.

He wrote and directed their first

play, *Let's Make a Slave*, a multi-media piece. Subsequently they mounted *Whose Got His Own*, *Raisin in the Sun*, *Slow Dance on the Killing Ground* and another of Jones' plays, *Black Woman*.

"What was really significant," Jones points out, "...was all of the local papers were saying they liked our stuff better than they liked anything else in town. So all of a sudden I became political...because then you start lobbying for money and for positions and I got immediately involved in that."

However, the success of the LeVern Players also resulted in a professional rivalry with the campus theatre. Jones, who was living in his grandmother's two-story frame house off-campus, got her permission, and that of his mother, to establish a 99-seat theatre on the ground floor and also to erect platforms in the ample backyard for an outdoor theatre. His grandmother was in a rest home but when his mother saw his renovations to the house, she was shocked. "My mother just didn't know what to think of this. She didn't know I was going to knock out walls and then paint the inside black."

With a theatre and a theatre company, Jones negotiated a \$50,000 grant from CETA (a Federal program to assist the underprivileged with employment) to do an 18th-month project. As a part of that project, Jones developed a novel, *The Silent Murder* by Mildred Flagg, into a play and re-mounted *Slow Dance on the Killing Ground*.

Then opportunity knocked again. Studying classical playwrights on his own, Jones became more and more intrigued with producing a classic. Finally he decided to do *Othello* and petitioned the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill to let him use their 1,000 seat amphitheatre. He not only got permission, he also got it rent-free. In the end, the production was a huge success and so impressive an undertaking that North Carolina U. invited Jones to audition for their theatre department as a graduate student.

Of the 300 students who applied, only ten including Jones were accepted. The University agreed to defer his entrance for a year to allow him to finish his degree requirements at North Carolina State.

However, the enormous demands of his extracurricular theatre activities (which now included the study of dance at the Contemporary Dance Theatre and a summer stint performing with the Chuck Davis

"It's very hard to make a living in the theatre. I think one of the ways that you do it is if you produce. That way you're creating projects as opposed to waiting to be picked up for a project..."

Dance Company in Nigeria, Africa) had taken their toll. "I was just engulfed," he explains. "I would sign up at the beginning of the semester...for 18 hours and end up taking 6...But I wanted to do theatre..." Jones was still lacking forty college credits, more than he could complete in a year especially with his other ongoing commitments.

An advisor suggested that he enter the Interdisciplinary Studies Program where he could design his own major. He did so and unexpectedly received 24 credit hours for life experience based on his achievements in the theatre, thereby leaving him a very manageable 16 hours to finish.

As a student at the University of North Carolina conservatory, Jones maintained a rigorous regime. He was at the conservatory six days a week from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. He would rehearse two or three plays while auditioning for another and still would have to keep up in his classes in voice, scenes, movement and singing. By the end of the first semester, four members of his ten-member class had been dropped.

The first summer after starting at the conservatory, Jones came to New York. He met Sheila Philips who heads Broadway Tix, a leading group sales agency. She offered to help him find employment after he graduated. Jones held her to her word and telephoned her from North Carolina the very day he graduated a year later. She hired him as an assistant temporarily to work on *Sasha Sings Dinah Washington* until he could find other employment. As Jones inquired about, he learned that producer Woodie King, Jr. was seeking an

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Ellen Cleghorne

I have seldom seen a more thoroughly beautiful performance than that of Ellen Cleghorne as Lena...a fully evolved performance...a tour de force, lacking nothing.

Rachael Cassidy
Poughkeepsie Journal

Black Culture on Tour in America

by Rita Davis

The Carter G. Woodson Foundation's *Black Culture on Tour in America* features world-class performing artists who celebrate the roots of Black heritage while creating new modes of cultural expression. For the 1989-90 season, the number of theater, dance, music, film and literary artists and groups in the program have been expanded to include 33 participants who will be touring across the country. Well-known artists have been included in the program along with emerging artists in an attempt to gain more visibility for the emerging artists. All of the artists have been chosen as a result of the high quality of their performances. Fifty percent of the performers live in New Jersey and the other fifty percent are from the states of New York, South Carolina, Georgia, Pennsylvania, Illinois and the District of Columbia.

"Our organization felt that it would be helpful to provide public schools, museums, libraries, colleges, cultural centers and other agencies with an easy way to reach some of the professional performing artists and writers who are in the forefront of the Black arts community in New Jersey and around the country," explains Woodson Foundation director Philip Thomas.

The program includes some of America's most provocative personalities who speak on today's critical challenges confronting the Black community in this country and abroad. The writers and speakers taking part in the program include Amiri Baraka, poet, playwright and essayist; Gil Noble, producer and host of the Emmy award-winning public affairs TV series *Like It Is*; Paul Robeson, Jr., lecturer on civil rights, cultural diversity, social politics and on his father's legacy as an artist, athlete, scholar and civil rights pioneer; Yolanda King, Dr. Martin Luther King's eldest child and a

Rita Davis is the Marketing Coordinator for the Carter G. Woodson Foundation. She is a recent graduate in Dance and Communications from Douglass College, New Brunswick, New Jersey.



Scott Joplin and Ragtime America. The Jan Rosemond Trio, (l. to r.) Frank Owens, piano; Jan Rosemond, flute; Joe Daley, tuba.

compelling speaker and artist who heads the Martin L. King Center Institute of Cultural Affairs in Atlanta.

Also participating are Mwatabu Okantah, an essayist and poet whose work centers on the similarities of the African, African-American and Caribbean cultures; Sonia Sanchez, internationally-acclaimed poet; Dr. La Francis Rodgers-Rose, a sociologist specializing in women's issues and male/female relationships; Dr. Jawanza Kunjufu, author of *Countering the Conspiracy to Destroy Black Boys*; and Dr. Lenworth Gunther, an authority on Malcolm X and Marcus Garvey.

"We believe that in order for the general public to gain a greater understanding of the contributions of Black Americans," Thomas continues, "there has to be more opportunities for them to have exposure to Black culture. A touring program seems to

be a good way of accomplishing this. The program also increases performance opportunities, audiences and visibility for African-American artists."

Among the dance offerings are: the modern dance group, Philadelphia Dance Company, better known as Phildanco; the Ishangi Dancers, a West African company under the direction of Baba Ishangi; the Okra Dance Company, which traces dance from their African and European origins to early popular dances in America; and Dinizulu's African Dancers, Drummers and Singers, a traditional African dance company under the direction of Nana Yao Opore Dinizulu.

Included in the theatrical offerings are the husband-and-wife team of Ossie Davis and Ruby Dee, who appeared individually most recently on Broadway in *I'm Not Rappaport*

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On Tour...

(continued from page 6)

and in *Checkmates* respectively; Vinie Burrows' one-woman show using prose and songs from African-American writers; *Yes, God Is Real*, a gospel musical written and directed by James M. Brown; and *Do Lord Remember Me*, a drama with music based on oral interviews of ex-slaves and performed by the Now Theatre Company.

Under the film category is St. Clair Bourne, a 20-year veteran producer and director with more than 30 films to his credit including *Let the Church Say Amen* (1973). His documentaries essentially challenge the stereotypical roles and images of Black Americans in the cinema. He is available for personal appearances and film showings.

Among the jazz artists taking part are vocalist Abbey Lincoln Moseka and her group; pianist and composer Steve Colson and his group; and Carrie Smith, a regular on the European jazz circuit, who is now appearing in the Broadway musical, *Black and Blue*.

The choral choices include the Newark Boys Chorus, an inner-city group of young male vocalists; and the North Jersey Philharmonic Glee Club, a group of 24 men who comprise one of the oldest male singing groups in the nation.

Special attractions include Sweet Honey in the Rock, an acapella quintet of Black women singers; *Scott Joplin and Ragtime America*, a perspective on Joplin's importance to the development of jazz; *Sea Island Montage*, a music and multi-media production celebrating the Gullah settlers off the coast of South Carolina; *Paul We Hardly Knew Ye: Robeson Remembered*, a classical music program in remembrance of Paul Robeson, featuring Edward Pierson; and *Yeh! Cric Yeh! Crac: Songs and Stories from Africa and Beyond*, featuring Pam Patrick and Tiye Giraud.

Gospel music is a new addition to the touring program for the 1989-90 season and includes the exciting Stephens Singers, whose sound evolved from the blues tradition; the Gospel Chariots, an all-male contingent who deliver a uniquely southern gospel style; the Holy Righteous Gospel Singers, who focus



(l. to r.) Tiye Giraud and Pam Patrick

on the old-time spirituals; the Royal Travelers of Georgia whose harmony invokes hand-clapping and toe-tapping; and Sister Sadie and the Biblettes who blend gospel with today's contemporary Christian sound.

The Woodson Foundation receives materials on a regular basis from great artists who are interested in participating in the program. "The biggest challenge has been the selection process and putting together a roster of artists and groups that offer a variety of information about the Black experience, balance in terms of artistic disciplines and...extensive experience in touring," Thomas notes. "There are always more artists than we are capable of including in the touring program at any one time. The information we receive is catalogued and when possible the artists' performances are reviewed and considered bi-annually."

The Carter G. Woodson Foundation is a non-profit, tax-exempt organization which is supported by grants. *Black Culture on Tour in America* is made possible in part by the New Jersey State Council on the Arts/Department of State and the National Endowment of the Arts/Expansion Arts Program.

For additional information about artist availability, performance fees, and technical requirements, interested sponsors should contact the Woodson Foundation, P.O. Box 1025, Newark, New Jersey 07101 or call (201) 242-0500. *



Cyril Nri: Black, British and Shakespearean

by Beth Turner

England is a country that has long been acclaimed for its tradition of theatrical excellence. The productions it exports to the United States are nearly always greeted with great fanfare and an equally lucrative box office.

However, from the theatrical image that England projects abroad, most audiences would consider England to be a totally homogeneous, Anglo-Saxon nation. Rarely, do we see or hear about England's Black communities in British drama and even more rarely do we learn about England's Black theatre community.

Therefore, the presence of Black actor, Cyril Nri, in the just recently completed American tour of England's foremost national theatre company, The Royal National Theatre of Great Britain, is cause for celebration. In a land imbued with tradition, Nri was cast non-traditionally as Banquo and Seyton in a production of William Shakespeare's *MacBeth*.

Needless to say, Cyril Nri is not an "overnight success." The road leading to his being cast in *MacBeth* was long, tortuous and spans two continents. It starts in Nigeria where Nri was born and lived until the age of eight. However, that year, 1968, the tragic Nigerian/Biafran War finally forced his parents to flee to London with Cyril and his three sisters. Although his parents had met (he was from Nigeria, she from Barbados), married and lived in London before, the arduous return as refugees tore the family apart. Nri's father eventually returned to Nigeria while his mother and the four children stayed in London.

In high school, the young Nri entered the world of theatre through the back door. He decided to join the drama class when he discovered that drama students could miss certain academic classes when they were in a show. So, he auditioned for Bertolt Brecht's *The Three Penny Opera* and got the lead. In the end, he came to love the theatre so much that, much to the chagrin of his family, he gave up engineering to become an actor.

In order to support himself and to save up for his subsequent training in theatre, Nri worked as a paperboy. Then he applied to three fine British theatre schools: Lambda, Central and Bristol Old Vic and was accepted by all three. He opted for Bristol Old Vic and a chance to get away from the city and a crowd that was moving into drugs.

He found Old Vic to be a "wonderful" school, giving him the disciplined training in the classics he desired. "It's what I wanted to learn...the classics. I can play being Black...I didn't need much training for that."

However, half way through the school, there was a change of principal. Unfortunately, the new principal's vision of drama did not rest easy with non-traditional casting and Nri found himself no longer having access to the roles in which he was interested. So, he decided to set up his own company.

With two other fellow students, writer Jeremy Brock and director Simon Curtis, he created a production, *Small Beginnings*. They took it to The National Student Drama Festival and won seven out of the thirteen awards including Best New Writer and Best Director.

Subsequently, Nri auditioned for and was accepted into the Royal Shakespeare Company where he has performed roles in *Julius Caesar*, *Twelfth Night*, *Henry VIII*, *Volpone*, *Kiss Me Kate* and others. He attributes his success to "a lot of luck...a lot of being in the right place at the right time and quite a lot of hard work."

One of the things, Cyril Nri finds most disturbing about the situation for Black actors in England is that there is still a great deal of stereotyping in the writing for the stage and television. When he pushes producers for a more realistic, sympathetic portrayal, they often counter by saying the public is not ready. It is this type of discrimination especially when it occurs among the well-educated and otherwise enlightened that Nri finds most disturbing.



Another aspect of theatre for Blacks in England that Nri finds frustrating is that the Black actor is always starting at square one no matter what he has just achieved or no matter what kinds of reviews he has received. After playing Ariel in Jonathan Miller's production of *The Tempest* at the Old Vic, Nri received "glowing" reviews. But when it came to being interviewed for publications or considered for film, the White actors were always sought out. "You don't actually get any of the rub off," he explained.

However, although the Black actor in England does face tremendous odds, Cyril Nri feels there is a growing number of strong young Black actors who have come or are coming out of the major drama schools (even at the token rate of one per year) who cannot be ignored. There is work going on in the classics and Nri feels this push will continue and increase.

When in England, Cyril Nri fills the quiet periods in his career with steady appearances on *Citizens*, a radio soap opera on BBC. He has been doing it for about a year and a half. However, in the future, he also looks forward to eventually doing more film. He has completed a film by David Hare called *Strapless* which opened last month in Los Angeles. Should he really set his mind on a career in film, it seems that it will have to happen. It seems as though anyone who can break down traditional casting patterns in highly traditional England, has to have the talent and grit to accomplish almost anything. *

Arts Hot-Line

(Due to the possibility of last minute changes, it is recommended that dates, times and ticket prices be verified with the individual box offices.)

Drama

El Hajj-Malik, by N.R. Davidson, Jr. The dramatization of the life of Malcolm X with music and poetry. Directed by Ajene Washington. The H.A.D.L.E.Y. Players, 207 W. 133rd St., New York, NY (212/926-0281 or 862-1179). **Apr. 28 - June 9**, Fri. & Sat. 7:30 pm; Sun. 2:30 pm; (\$8; \$6, seniors; \$4, children).

The Forbidden City by Bill Gunn. A teen-ager's struggle to survive problems with his parents. Directed by Joseph Papp. Featuring Gloria Foster and Frankie Faison. The Public Theatre, 425 Lafayette St., New York, NY (212/598-7150). **Opens Apr. 6.**

The Member of the Wedding by Carson McCullers. A poignant comedy/drama centering around a Black housekeeper and her two young charges. Directed by Harold Scott. Featuring Esther Rolle, Amelia Campbell, Calvin Lennson Armitage, Lou Ferguson, Lindsay Gordon, Drew Snyder, William Christian, Steven Douglas Cook, Jeri Lee, Deborah Strang and David Whalen. Roundabout Theatre, 100 E. 17th St., New York, NY (212/420-1883). **Mar. 8 - Apr. 30**, Tues. - Fri. 8 pm; Sat. 2 & 8 pm; Sun. 2 pm; (\$18 - \$29).

Playboy of the West Indies by Mustapha Matura. Storytelling, romance and laughter as life in a Trinidad fishing village is disrupted by a stranger who claims he murdered his father. Directed by Dennis Scott. Yale Rep Theatre, Chapel & York Sts, New Haven, CT 06520, (203/432-1234). **Previews Apr. 25 - 27. Opens Apr. 25 - May 20**. (\$16 - \$23.50).

Some Sweet Day by Nancy Fales Garrett. A Southern Black family gathers for a funeral. Directed by Seret Scott. Long Wharf Theatre, New Haven, Ct (203/787-4282) **Closes Apr. 30.**

Strong Voices Tender Spirits. Two one-woman shows combining drama, music and poetry. Featuring Vinic Burrows and Novella Nelson. Sponsored by Women for Racial and Economic Equality (WREE). Triplex One Theater, Borough of Manhattan Community College, 199 Chambers St., New York, NY (212/305-1103). **Sat. June 10**, 7:30 pm; \$15 & \$25).

The Vigil by Charles J. Jenkins. A harrowing and terrifying tale of two fugitives and a mysterious derelict trapped together in an abandoned building. Featuring Charles Turner, Raphael Nash

and Tyrone Wilson. The Rapp Theater Company, 220 E. 4th St., New York, NY (212/529-5921). **May 1 - May 27** Tues. - Fri. 8 pm; Sat. 2 & 8 pm.

Comedy

Driving Miss Daisy, a new comedy by Alfred Uhry. Set in Atlanta, it reveals the relationship between an elderly widow and her driver. Directed by Ron Lagomarsino. Featuring Frances Sternhagen, Earle Hyman and Anderson Matthews. John Houseman Theater, 450 W. 42nd St., New York, NY 10036 (212/564-8038). Tues. 8 pm; Wed. 2 & 8 pm; Thurs. & Fri. 8 pm; Sat. 2 & 8 pm; Sun. 3 pm. **Open run.**

Musicals

Black and Blue conceived and directed by Claudio Segovia and Hector Orezoli. A musical dance revue about the age of jazz. Choreographed by Henry LeTang. Fayard Nicholas and Cholly Atkins. Featuring Ruth Brown, Linda Hopkins and Carrie Smith, Bunny Briggs, Jimmy Slyde and musicians Sir Roland Hanna, Claude Williams and Grady Tate. Minskoff Theatre, 200 W. 45th St., New York, NY 10036, (212/246-0102). **Opened Jan. 26**. Tues. 8 pm; Wed. 2 & 8 pm; Thurs. & Fri. 8 pm; Sat. 2 & 8; Sun. 3 pm; (\$32.50 - \$50).

Mama I Want To Sing by Vy Higginsen and Ken Wydro. A moving saga of a young girl who leaves the gospel choir to become a pop singer. Directed by Ken Wydro. Featuring Doris Troy. **Sat 2 & 8 pm; (\$15 - \$20).** **Let the Music Play Gospel** produced by Vy Higginsen's Reach Productions. A rousing gospel musical with the greatest gospel hits of all time with Vy Higginsen as hostess and narrator. Fri. 8 pm; Sat. 3 pm; and Sun. 5 pm after Feb. 19. (\$15 - \$20; group rates available). The Heckscher Theater, 1230 Fifth Ave., New York, NY (212/534-6311). **Open run.**

Over Forty by Celeste Colson Walker. A musical about four women. Music and lyrics by Weldon. Featuring Eunice Newkirk, Lady Peachena, Janyse M. Singleton and Marisa Turner. The Billie Holiday Theatre, 1368 Fulton St., Brooklyn, NY (718/636-0919). Wed. - Fri. 8 pm; Sat. 3 & 8 pm; Sun. 4 pm; (\$6 - \$12). **Closes May 28.**

Prizes, a new musical celebrating life in the theatre and the struggles toward winning the industry's highest award. Book by Raffi Pehlivanian. Music and lyrics by Charles DeForest. Directed by Lee Minskoff. AMAS Repertory Theatre, 1 E. 104th St., third fl., New York, NY (212/534-6080). **Apr. 26 - May 21**, Wed. - Sat. 8 pm; Sun. 3 pm; (\$10).

Sarafinal A musical about a class of South African children who create a play on the struggles of Nelson Mandela. Written and directed by Mbongeni Ngema. Music by Ngema and Hugh Masekela. Cort Theatre, 138 W. 48th St. New York, NY (212/239-6200). Tues. 8 pm; Wed. 2 & 8 pm; Thurs. & Fri. 8 pm; Sat. 2 & 8 pm; Sun. 3 pm. **Open run.**

The Song of Sheba, a musical that focuses on five great ladies of song: Bessie Smith, Dinah Washington, Lena Horne, Billie Holiday and Sarah Vaughn. Book and lyrics by Elmo Terry Morgan. Original score and music by Clarice LaVerne Thompson. Featuring Marsha Z. West, Clarice LaVerne and Cheryl Hewitt. National Black Theatre, 2033 Fifth Ave., New York, NY (212/427-5615 or 926-1049). **Opens Apr. 22.** (\$12 - \$15).

Opera

Requiem by Giuseppe Verdi. Chorus and Orchestra under the direction of Estonian conductor, Eri Klas. Mass Chorus comprising choirs of Mother AME Zion, Janes United Methodist, Salem United Methodist, St. Martin's Episcopal and St. Mark's United Methodist Churches and voices from The City College Chorus, Schubert Music Society, Harlem School of the Arts and Opera Ebony Singers under the direction of Solomon Heriott. Geoffrey Fairweather, assistant conductor. Featuring Leavata Johnson, soprano; Camellia Johnson, mezzo-soprano; Cesar Antonio Suarez, tenor; and Matti Salminen, bass. A joint production of Opera Ebony and Friends of the Davis Center at Aaron Davis Hall, 133th & Convent Ave., New York, NY (212/690-4100). **Sat. May 13**, 8 pm; (\$5, standing room; \$15, mezzanine; \$20, orchestra; \$50, Patron's circle including pre-performance reception).

Readings

The Frank Silvera Writers Workshop Reading Series.

UBU

Repertory Theatre

presents

A Two-Part Festival:

Revolution

Against Racism and Oppression

April 17 - 26

Heroines of the French Revolution

May 10 - June 2

Staged readings and productions, personal appearances of playwrights from Africa and France, panel discussions, and music and poetry.

For complete information on the schedule and the location of events, call (212) 679-7540.

Arts Hot-Line

Frank Silvera Writers Workshop
317 W. 125th St., New York, NY
212/662-8463 **Every Mon. 7:30**
pm, (Free Writers/Directors
production in May)

Homage to the Revolution
Etudes by Emmanuel Genvrin and
Black Slavery adapted from
Olympe de Gouges by Emmanuel
Genvrin. Both works are
translated by Townsend Brewster.
Followed by discussion with the
playwright. An UBU Repertory
Theatre production at Hunter
College Little Theatre Hunter
Courttyard, 68th St & Lex Ave.
Tues. Apr. 18 8 pm. Free. *Burn
River Burn* by Jean Pol Fargeau.
Translated by Jil MacDougall. A
play about perennial racial taboos
by the co-author of the acclaimed
film, *Chocolat*. UBU Repertory
Theatre, 15 W 28th St., New
York, NY 212-679-7540 **Sat.**
Apr. 22, 8 pm. Free.
Reservations essential.

Poetry

**An Evening of Poetry and
Music** featuring Sony Labou
Tansi and Philippe Sita, U.B.
Repertory Theatre's
artists-in-residence. (See
READINGS above.) Co-sponsored
by UBU and the Mission of the
People's Republic of Congo. The
Auditorium Dag Hammarskjöld
Library United Nations, 42nd St.
at First Ave., New York, NY
(212/744-7840) **Thurs. Apr. 20,**
7:30 pm. Free.

**An Evening of Poetry and
Music** (Similar to program above
but also featuring third
artist-in-residence Bernara Zadi
Zacourou. Schomburg Center for
Research in Black Culture, 515
Madison X Blvd. at 135th St.
New York, NY (212/862-1000)
Fri. Apr. 21, 6:30 pm. Free.

Stand-Up Comedy

Spring Fever features Elen
Cleghorne, Mike Ivy and Reggie
McFadden, Tony Earl, Shawn
Waynas, Brian Campbell, Herb
Quinones, Greer Berna, Darryl
Lynah, Robert Jetter, Nancy
Mara, James Austin, Larry
Campbell and special appearance
by Chris Rock. A Sweetwaters and
Madhouse Productions
presentation at Sweetwaters, 170
Amsterdam Ave., New York, NY
(212/873-4100) **Opens Tues. May**
28 pm. Continues **May 13-27**
Sats. 9 pm. \$10 & \$10 minimum
drinks or dinner.

Dance

Alvin Ailey Dance Theater. An
electrifying company with a
unique form of dance that uses a
combination of styles ranging
from classical to modern to jazz to
gospel to new wave. **Sat. May 6, 8**
pm. \$19.50 & \$22.50.

Joan Miller's Dance Players, a
dance company with a sense of
humor. **Wed. Apr. 26, 3:30 pm &**
Fri. Apr. 28, noon. Free.
Lehman Center for the
Performing Arts, Lehman College,
Bedford Park Blvd., Bronx, NY
212/960-8833.

Manhattan Tap a company that
brings tap back into the jazz
scene. Featuring Heather Cornell,
James Cunningham, Shelly Oliver
and Tony Scoppio and a different
guest each week.
Charles "Cookie" Cook, **Apr. 24.**
Top of the Gate, Bleecker &
Thompson, New York, NY
(212/580-5863) **Every Mon. in**
Apr., 8 pm. (\$12.50).

Concerts

Al Jarreau. Tropicana Concert
Series at Radio City Music Hall,
49th & 6th Ave., New York, NY
212/757-3100) **Apr. 21-23, Fri.**
Sun. 8 pm. (\$25 - \$30).

Cullen Knight Band.
Trumpeter/composer Knight's
performing career spans from
James Brown to Cab Calloway.
His quartet will perform
selections from his newest Jazz
Suite. Manna House productions
at Saint Peter's Church, 619
Lexington Ave., New York, NY
(212/722-8223) **May 14, 7:30 pm.**
\$7, \$5, seniors & students, \$3.50,
groups.

**Gail Nelson in Concert for
Artist Series.** St. Mary's
Episcopal Church, Classon &
Willoughby Sts. Brooklyn, NY
(718/622-3262) **Sun. Apr. 30, 4**
pm.

Joe Williams. The Waldorf
Astoria Park Ave. & 50th St.,
New York, NY (212/355-5000)
Mon. May 15.

Jazz Break. An afterwork
interlude by Jamaica Arts Center
Jazz Ensemble led by Jazz Master
Harold Ousley. Jamaica Arts
Center, 161-04 Jamaica Ave.,
Jamaica, NY (718/658-7400) **Fri.**
May 12, 6:30 pm. \$2, \$1, seniors.

(continued on page 11)



onstage in New Jersey

Plus a spring celebration of Jazz, Dance and Poetry performances

SCHEDULE AND TICKET PRICES

Artist	Date	Time	Location	Advance Ticket Price
Jackie McLean	May 6	8pm	Essex County College	\$10
Sweet Honey In The Rock	May 13	7pm	Essex County College	\$17
McCoy Tyner, Philadanco & Sonja Sanchez	May 21	5pm	Essex County College	\$15

ORDER YOUR TICKETS NOW AND SAVE!

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(Visa, MasterCard and American Express accepted)

Newark Symphony Hall-Box Office, 1030 Broad Street, Newark, N.J.
Produced by the Woodson Foundation and made possible in part by the
New Jersey State Council on the Arts, the National Endowment for the Arts,
Essex County College and the Newark Public Library.

Arts Hot-Line

(continued from page 10)

On Stage in New Jersey. *David Murray.* Dramatic solos, breakneck tempo, rhythmic complexities and dazzling melodies. **Sat. Apr. 22, 8 pm;** (\$12). *Jackie McLeans,* Chairman of the Department of African-American music at Hartt College of Music, is one of the few established bebop musicians to fully embrace the new developments of music. **Sat. May 6, 8 pm;** (\$12). *Sweet Honey in the Rock,* the acappella quintet of Black women singers of spirituals, rhythm and blues, and African tribal melodies. **Sat. May 13, 7 pm;** (\$20). Carter G. Woodson and Essex County College productions at Mary B. Burch Theater for the

Performing Arts, Essex County College, 303 University Ave., Newark, NJ 07102, (201/877-4421).

Valerie Capers Concert, a benefit for the Unity and Strength Scholarship Fund of Bronx Community College. Bronx Community College, Hall of Fame Playhouse, 181st St. & University Ave., Bronx, NY **Sun. Apr. 23, 3 - 5 pm;** (\$15; \$20 with reception).

Vital Expressions in American Art. *Dorothy Donegan,* pianist of exceptional versatility who has developed a unique integration of classical European, gospel, boogie woogie, and jazz music traditions. The Studio Museum in Harlem,

144 W. 125th St., New York, NY 10027 (212/864-4500). **Thurs. June 1, 8 pm;** (\$15, nonmembers; \$12, members).

Special Events

The Philadelphia Connection. *McCoy Tyner,* one of America's most influential jazz pianist. *Phildanco,* a.k.a. The Philadelphia Dance Company easily moves from the classical genre of music by Bach and Ravel to the modern style of dance to the contemporary rhythms of Prince and Lionel Richie. *Sonia Sanchez,* poet, activist and first Presidential Fellow for Temple University.

Part of the On Stage in New Jersey program sponsored by Carter G. Woodson and Essex County College. Mary B. Burch Theater for the Performing Arts, Essex County College, 303 University Ave., Newark, NJ 07102, (201/877-4421). **Sun. May 21, 5 pm;** (\$17).

Seminars

An Evening With UBU Repertory Theatre Artists-in-Residence (See READINGS above). Performances by Sony Labou Tansi, Phillipe Sita, Bernard Zadi Zaourou. Program also includes demonstrations of their current workshops in performance and playwriting. UBU Repertory Theatre, 15 W. 28th St., New York, NY (212/679-7548). **Thurs. Apr. 27, 8 pm;** (\$10).

Bob Marley and the Wailers, a lecture by noted broadcaster, journalist and author, Malika Lee Whitney Museum of African American History & Arts in the Arts Gallery of the Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. State Office Building, 163 W. 125th St., New York, NY (212/873-5040). **Sat. Apr. 29, 6 pm.** A part of the Roots of Reggae Film Festival. See FILM below.

Use of the Drum in African-Dominican Religion. A discussion and demonstration by Isidro Bobadilla, master drummer. Caribbean Cultural Center, 408 W. 58th St., New York, NY 10019 (212/307-7420). **Wed. Apr. 26, 6:30 - 8 pm;** (\$5, nonmembers; \$4, members.) Limited seating on a first come basis.

Film

Passing Through by Ted Lange and Larry Clark. Directed by Larry Clark. Starring Clarence Muse. A combination of the beauty and spirit of Black music and a look at the political struggle of the economic and cultural oppression in the recording industry. 20 West Theatre, 20 W. 120th St., New York, NY (212/410-2101). **Apr. 16 - 29.** Tues. - Sat. 8:30 pm; (\$5, nonmembers; \$3, members).

Reggae Legends Film Tribute. *Rockers,* a celebration of Jamaica's Rastafarian culture, shot in the tenements of West Kingston and in the lush surrounding hills. Directed by Theodoros Bafaloukos. Features Leroy "Horsemouth" Wallace, Richard "Dirty Harry" Hall, and Jacob Millre, Winston "Burning Spear" Rodney. Includes a collection of reggae hits. 12 noon, 4:10 pm; and 8:20 pm. *Bob*

★ 1989 NATIONAL BLACK THEATRE FESTIVAL

610 Coliseum Drive
Winston-Salem, NC 27106
Telephone (919) 723-2365

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The Winston-Salem Stouffer Hotel is the official headquarter hotel for the 1989 National Black Theatre Festival. Room rates are \$49 regardless (single - double or triple). This is the hotel we recommend for artists, guest celebrities and administrators in order that quality networking can take place. Call (919) 725-3500 to make reservations. Be sure to mention that you are attending the festival in order to receive the discount rates. These rooms are going fast. Please make your reservations as quickly as possible.

Should rooms in the Stouffer Hotel become unavailable, please call the Winston-Salem Hyatt Hotel, another festival hotel with the \$49 rates. Call (919) 725-1234. Call the 1989 NBTF office for a list of other hotels and motels in the city.

A CELEBRATION AND REUNION OF SPIRIT

* (A national outreach program of the N.C. Black Repertory Company, Inc.)

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Arts Hot-Line

Marley: Legend, a personal musical compilation of the most popular in-concert performances of Bob Marley and the Wailers. Directed by Don Letts and Torquil Dearden. 1:40 pm and 5:50 pm. **The Harder They Come**, an exhilarating Jamaican cult classic about a budding country musician. Featuring Jimmy Cliff, Janet Barkley and Carl Bradshaw. 2:35 pm and 6:45 pm. **Fri. Apr. 28 and Sat. Apr. 29.** Museum of African American History & Arts in the Arts Gallery of the Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. State Office Building, 163 W. 125th St., New York, NY (212/873-5040). (\$5, adults; \$3, seniors & students with I.D.).

Visual Arts

All-Harlem Art Exhibition. Curated by Lowery S. Sims, Associate Curator at the Metropolitan Museum of Art and Deirdre Bibby, Head of Art and Artifacts at the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture and Art. Aaron Davis Hall, 134th & Convent Ave., New York, NY (212/690-6900). **May 10 - June 14.**

African Art and Leadership. An exhibition of 75 objects from various nationalities in four West African countries that examines the relationship of art to political authority in Africa. The Brooklyn Museum, Eastern Pkwy and Washington Ave., Brooklyn, NY (718/638-5900). **Feb. 13 - June 30.**

Black Printmakers and the WPA. An exhibition at Lehman College Art Gallery, Lehman College, Bedford Park West, Bronx, NY (212/960-8731). **Closes June 6.**

Contemporary Haitian Artists Mar. 8 - Apr. 29. **Deja Vu: Haitian Influence in Contemporary American Art**, an exhibit of the works of Paul Gardere, Alison Saar and Ken Tisa. Guest essayist, Robert Farris Thompson. **Mar. 8 - Apr. 29.** **James Brown**, an original member of Jamaica Art Center's Coop artists group, presents his fourth solo show, on Haiti. **Mar. 8 - Apr. 29.** **New Members**, a debut exhibition of three new members of Jamaica Arts Center's Artists Coop, a collective of primarily Queens-based African-American artists. **May 10 - July 2.** Reception, **May 13**, 2 - 4 pm. Jamaica Arts Center, 161-04 Jamaica Ave., Jamaica, NY (718/658-7400). **Tues. - Sat. 10 am - 5 pm.**

The Hale Woodruff Memorial Biennial, an exhibition in honor of the noted artist and educator.

Featuring Francisco Garcia, Ruth Lampkins, Carolina Escobar, Pat Ward Williams, Gregory Henry, Moritz Kellerman, Renoc Townsend, and Thomas Miller. **Art as a Verb: The Evolving Continuum.** Featuring the work of 13 artists including Howardena Pindell, Senga Nengudi and Charles Abramson. The Studio Museum in Harlem, 144 W. 125th St., New York, NY 10027 (212/864-4500). **Mar. 12 - June 18.** **Wed. - Fri. 10 am - 5 pm; Sat. & Sun. 1 - 6 pm; (\$1.50, adults; \$.50, students, seniors, children; members, free; seniors free on Wed.).**

Photography

African Spirituality, a photographic documentary focusing on the traditional and contemporary belief systems which have survived and can be traced directly to their foundation in West Africa. Caribbean Cultural Center, 408 W. 58th St., New York, NY 10019 (212/307-7420). **Mar. 17 - May 20.** **Tues. - Fri. 11 am - 6 pm; Sat. 1 - 5 pm; (\$2; \$1, students/seniors; members free).**

Workshops and Classes

ATAC (Artistic Technical Assistance Collective) Seminar Series. A workshop providing technical stagecraft training. Coordinated by Charles McClennahan. Through June. **Sats. 1 pm.** Frank Silvera Writers Workshop, 317 W. 125th St., NY, NY (212/662-8463).

The Young Set

Classes

Theatre Visitation Program. Teachers may arrange to have their class (grades 3 - 8) come and visit Black Spectrum Theatre. Hands on demonstration of computer lighting system and state of the art sound system in the theatre control room; visit actors costume area and see a live performance. Black Spectrum Theatre Company, Roy Wilkins Park, 119th Ave. & Merrick Blvd., Jamaica, NY (718/723-1800). **May 17, 24, 31.** 10 am - 12 noon; (\$2, per child; 2 adults free with 20 children).

Entertainment

The Ice Wolf, a play with music and dance by Joanna Kraus. A child, rejected by her village, tries to find a new home in the forest

among animals. Appropriate for ages 8 and older. Performed by the Children's Theatre Company of Black Spectrum Theatre Company, Roy Wilkins Park, 119th Ave. & Merrick Blvd., Jamaica, NY (718/723-1800). **Apr. 15 - 30.** **Sat. & Sun., 3 pm; (\$3.50, children; \$5, adults).**

Pickney Place, a children's radio program designed to promote and stimulate reading for young audiences and parents. Story-telling, reviews of books and shows, news items, music, a children's calendar of events. Special guest hosts. Produced by Malika Lee Whitney. Tico Wells and Toni Ann Johnson, co-hosts. WBAI - 99.5 FM, **Weds. 5 - 5:30 pm.**

17th Annual City College Spring Poetry Festival. Readings by students and guest poets with prizes to the "Best Poets in N.Y.C. High Schools." (212/690-5408). **Barry Wallenstein. Fri. May 5, 10 am - 4 pm.** **South American Music Project.** An ensemble led by Marco Rizo highlights the diversity of Latino culture with a musical and rhythmic journey through Africa, the Caribbean and the Americas. **Mon. May 15, 10:30 am; grades K - 7; (212/690-6900).** **Tues. May 16, 10:30 am; grades 8 - 12; (82).** **Langston Hughes Festival**, a choral-speaking festival of poetry and performances by young people. (212/690-8116 or 690-5408). **Thurs. May 18, 10 am - noon.** Olu Dara, widely recognized musical innovator, interlaces his cornet and harmonica music with strains of blues, jazz, gospel and African rhythms. (212/690-4100). **Fri. June 2, 10:30 am; (Free by reservation).** Aaron Davis Hall, 133th & Convent Ave., New York, NY

Universal Language. Using an extensive array of costumes and instruments, this multi-cultural ensemble of dancers and singers explore the African-American heritage and trace the ways in which African music has influenced music in the U.S., South America and the Caribbean. Jamaica Arts Center, 161-04 Jamaica Ave., Jamaica, NY (718/658-7400). **Sat. May 13, noon; (\$3, children; \$5, adults).**

Stages Beyond

Alabama

Who's Got His Own by Ron Milner. A 60's drama dealing with wife and child abuse, interracial relationships abortion and fear. Directed by John Arthur House. Tuskegee University Theatre,



Ellen Cleghorne

in

Spring Fever
Stand-up Comedy

May 13 - 27
Sats. 9 pm
at
Sweetwaters
170 Amsterdam Ave.
New York, NY
212/ 678-7208

205-E Huntington Memorial Building, Tuskegee University, Tuskegee, AL 36088 (205/727-8104 or 8113). **Apr. 19 - 23.** **Wed. - Sun.**

California
Tony Preston

Correspondent
P.O. Box 481287
Los Angeles, CA 90048
(213/285-8623)

Ain't No Use in Goin' Home, Jodie's Got Your Gal and Gone: Sayings from the Life and Writings of Junebug Jabbo Jones, Vol. III. Written by John O'Neal (co-founder of the Free Southern Theater), Nayo-Barbara Malcolm Watkins and Q.R. Hand, Jr. An exploration of the realities and contradictions of Black participation in United States military adventures. Directed by Steven Kent. Featuring John O'Neal and composer/musician Michael Keck. Oakland Ensemble Theatre, Alice Arts Center, 1428 Alce St., Oakland, CA 94612 (415/839-5510). **Apr. 12 - May 7.** **Thurs. - Sat. 8 pm; Sun. 2:30 pm; (\$12 & \$16).**

Fly Blackbird Revisited by C. Bernard Jackson. A musical odyssey of the Civil Rights era based on Obie

(continued on page 14)

Jones...

(continued from page 5)

assistant. Jones made an appointment and was interviewed by King. Two days later, only ten days after setting foot in New York, Jones had become King's assistant for the National Black Touring Circuit, a program designed to present quality Black theatre to regional audiences in the United States.

In the six years since he has started, Jones has helped the Touring Circuit to grow from a four-show repertory (*Home, Love to All Lorraine, Zora* and *When the Chickens Come Home to Roost*) to one with over twenty projects. These have included *Williams and Walker, Shades of Harlem, I Have a Dream*, and *Celebration*. Jones has booked and set up between 120 - 125 shows throughout the country. "It's been a real enchantment," he beams. He has also had the opportunity to act in *Home, I Have a Dream* and in a new project, *Medal of Honor Rag*.

The National Black Touring Circuit has also opened the door to international travel for Jones. *I Have a Dream* traveled to the Wiltz Festival in Luxembourg last summer and will be going to the Brighton Festival in England, May 22 - 27 this year and possibly on to London. (Write to Brighton Festival, Gardner Centre, University of Sussex, Falmer, Brighton or telephone 0-1144-0273-26894 for further information). The play will also be traveling to Italy this summer and hopefully to Zimbabwe in the not-too-distant future.

Currently, Herman Jones is on a "hurtin'" schedule. On leave from his Ph.D. program, he spends part of his week at Shaw University in North Carolina, teaching four courses: Criticism, Oral Interpretation, African-American Drama and Theatre History. Then he hops a plane back to New York to continue his work for the National Black Touring Circuit where he is currently directing *One Mo' Time* in addition to his administrative chores. Furthermore, he has just successfully co-produced a major project — the Royal National Theatre of Great Britain's production of *MacBeth* and a contemporary play, *Apart from George* at the Arts for Living Center at 466 Grand Street in New York, March 14 - 25.

He attributes his ability to juggle so many challenging activities simultaneously in part to an ability to focus on the task at hand and leave behind thoughts related to other projects. He also points out that "I'm a stickler for organization...Things don't always work out, but I'm about at 90 - 95% of not skipping things or missing things."

The other important element in handling such a madcap schedule has been the willingness of the people with whom he works to make adjustments for his schedule. He is particularly grateful to Woodie King, Jr. "Woodie has been just a godsend," he notes. "Through my association with him and the National Black Touring Circuit, I get all types of offers to do stuff...He told me once that it's never about one thing, it's always about the accumulation of things, gaining the experience." In turn, in Herman Jones, King has found an enthusiastic assistant. "I'm very, very excited about the future of the Touring Circuit," says Jones. "...I think the vision of it is incredible."

Jones is also excited about his first major project as a producer. Bringing the world famous Royal National Theatre of Great Britain to Arts for Living Center on the Lower Eastside was a tremendous coup. Jones and Julian Ellison, his British co-producer, began laying the ground over a year ago. Together, as Zebra Theatrical Promotions Ltd., they have begun to realize Jones' dream of taking quality Black plays abroad much as the Touring Circuit takes them throughout the United States. On the other hand, they have encouraged foreign theatre companies to reciprocate by coming to the United States. It is in this manner that Jones and Ellison will bring *Dinah Washington, Singer of the Blues*, a Jomandi Theatre production from Atlanta, Georgia to Italy and bring the Compagnia Teatrale Tiberio Fiorelli from Bari, Italy to New York in May.

Producing is an area in which Jones would like to see more Blacks. "It's very hard to make a living in the theatre. I think one of the ways that you do it is if you produce. That way you're creating projects as opposed to waiting to be picked up for a project...It's very significant to have young Blacks getting involved..."

Attention All Black Playwrights!

For inclusion in a catalog listing of minority plays available for production, please send a letter describing your play in less

e.g. PASTTIME by Eric Rhodes
A comedy of a West Indian man
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(1 male, 3 females - all Black. 1 set)

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Dept.
Tempe, AZ 85281

All plays must have been professionally produced at least once.

As for himself, Jones feels he has learned firsthand at the side of one of the best. He states that Woodie King, Jr. is "the most prolific Black producer in the world...and the whole past six years I'm just learning, learning, learning... Ultimately, I'd like to produce a show on Broadway. I'm working towards that. I'm very ambitious. I would like to have that happen."

Still, when the demands of his daily life (which also include three film projects awaiting financing) are summed up, thoughts of 'burn-out' do occur. Jones quickly dismisses the thought. "I want to stay busy. I don't want a down period. And if I do have one, I want it to be designed." [a planned vacation].

Herman LeVern Jones' energy, vision, determination, ambition and daring have not begun to be played out. "It's been an exciting period for me, this whole thing. And I'm the type who can't wait to get up in the morning and get it going...seeing what the next day will bring."*

Correction

Last month's spectacular photo of Rosalind Cash was taken by photographer, Darius. John Sekura is the talent agent for Cash and Downing.

Arts Hot-Line

(continued from page 12)

Award-winning musical *Fly Blackbird* which was co-authored by Jackson and James Hatch. Features Mel Carter, Emily Yancy and Lance Hardy. **Mar. 10 - Apr. 22.** Fri. & Sat. 8 pm; Sun. 3 & 7 pm; (\$15). **Spring Festival of Plays** by Ernie L. Fann. Three 2-act plays will run simultaneously at the Center's Auditorium, Lodge and Stormy Weather Cafe. **May 4 - 21.** Fri. & Sat. 7:30 pm; Sun. 2:30 & 7:30 pm; (\$12). **T K O** written and produced by Cliff Roquemore and William "Mickey" Stevenson (1989 NAACP Theatre Awards). An exciting new musical exploring the rise and fall of the career of a welter-weight champion of the world. **Innocent City Cultural Center**, 1308 S. New Hampshire Ave., Los Angeles, CA (213/387-1161).

Freddie Hubbard in Concert. Kimball's East, Emeryville, CA (415/658-2555). **May 13 - May 7.**

It's About Time, a father and son musical about growing up and growing old. With Oscar Brown, Jr., and Oscar Brown III. The **Ebony Showcase Theatre**, 4720 W. Washington Blvd., Los Angeles, CA (213/936-1107). **Indefinite run.** Fri. & Sat. 8:30 pm; Sun. 5:30 pm.

Joe Williams in Concert. Dorothy Chandler Pavillion, Los Angeles, CA (213/972-7211). **Tues. Apr. 25.** Bob Hope Cultural Center, Palm Springs, CA (619/340-2787). **Sat. Apr. 29** Orange County Performing Arts Center, Costa Mesa, CA (714/556-2787). **Sun. May 7.**

Lady Day. An evening of son and reminiscence with Billie Holiday. Featuring Rena Scott. **Odyssey Theatre Ensemble**, 12111 Ohio Ave., West Los Angeles, CA (213/826-1626). **Indefinite run.** Fri. 8:30 pm, Sat. 8:30 & 10 pm; Sun. 7:30 pm.

Oba Oba, the "Hit Brazilian musical extravaganza" in its 5th month. **Wilshire Theatre**, 8440 Wilshire Blvd., Beverly Hills, CA (213/410-1062).

Three Ways Home by Casey Kurti. A play about a Black teen-age boy, his welfare mother, a White computer animator and their struggle to find common ground. **Feb. 24 - Apr. 30.** **Joe Turner's Come and Gone** by Pulitzer and Tony Award-winning playwright August Wilson. This Los Angeles premiere is a co-production of the San Francisco American Conservatory Theatre and The Los Angeles Theater Center. **Apr. 7 - June 4.** **Eden** by Steve Carter. A West Indian *Romeo and Juliet* set in the 1920's Harlem during Garvey's Back to Africa Movement. Featuring its

original acting award-winners Marilyn Coleman and Carl Lumby. **Previews - May 12 - 18.** **Runs May 19-July 18.** The Los Angeles Theatre Center, 514 S. Spring St., Los Angeles, CA (213/627-2250).

Illinois

Don't Leave Go My Hand by Arthur Roberson. A drama with music, this play tells of an unrequited love that is transformed into eerie, surrealist currents of retribution. Directed by Vantile Whitfield, founder of the D.C. Black Repertory Theatre in Washington, D.C. **May 11 - June 18.** ETA Creative Arts Foundation, 7558 South Chicago Avenue, Chicago, IL 60619 (312/752-3955). **Thurs. - Sat. 8 pm; Sun. 3 & 7 pm; (\$10).**

Massachusetts

Odetta, one of the true giants of the folk music renaissance of the 50's and 60's. **Ladysmith Black Mambazo**, the South African singing group best known for its involvement with the Paul Simon *Graceland* tour. The New World Theater, The Concert Hall, Fine Arts Center, Univ. of Mass. at Amherst, MA (413/545-2511). **Sat. May 6; (\$18 & \$20; \$9 & \$10, students).**

Minnesota

Ceremonies in Dark Old Men by Lonne Elder III. This masterpiece tells the story of a Harlem family that tries to beat the system and change the conditions imposed on their race

by White America's racism. Directed by Horace Bond. Featuring Lou Bellamy, Marion McClinton, Bruce Thompson, Denise Ellis, Michael Jensen, Wendy Ingram and Benny Cannon. **Penumbra Theatre Company**, The Martin Luther King Building, 270 North Kent Street, Saint Paul, MN 55102-1794 (612/224-4601). **Apr. 26 - May 21.** Thurs. - Sun. 8 pm;

(\$8.50 & \$9.50; \$7.50 & 8.50, seniors; \$7, students).

Missouri

Dressin' Up, Steppin' Out and Gettin' Down. A revue of song, dance and fashion from the 1940's to the 1980's. Conceptualized by Ron Himes, producing director. **May 4 - May 28.** St. Louis Black

(continued on page 15)

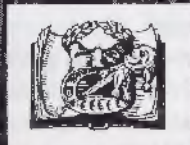
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